

Town of Milan Comprehensive Plan**6. Infrastructure**Chapter Highlights:

Milan has less infrastructure than many municipalities and benefits from a healthy tax structure typical of rural towns. Milan also benefits from significant outdoor recreation lands which are an important aspect of the Town's rural character. Access to these areas could be improved by creating trails and sidewalks. The maintenance of roads and capable fire and emergency services are important to the Town's citizens. The rising cost of school taxes is a significant concern. Compact development in priority growth areas and its possible implications for wastewater treatment needs and costs are also of concern. The historic small-lot development of Lafayetteville poses challenges that need community study and action to improve land use. Resolution will require the continuing involvement of citizens. A consistent theme from community feedback is the need for additional enforcement of existing regulations. Recommendations include actions to address the broad range of infrastructure issues.



Town of Milan Comprehensive Plan**6. Infrastructure****Infrastructure****A. Introduction**

This committee had a broad scope of topics to review and, of necessity, relied on the expertise of other town and area officials in the analysis of issues and development of recommendations. Topics covered included transportation, utilities, fire and emergency services, police, education, water supply, health care, recreation and waste management services.

Interviews were conducted during the course of the committee's research with Glen Butler, Highway Superintendent; Greg Becker, Chief of Fire/EMS; Jackie Reynolds, Chair of the Town Recreation Committee; and Lieutenant Gary Bashor, Dutchess County Sheriff's Department. For research on schools, the committee interviewed Joe Phelan, Superintendent, Rhinebeck Central School District, Sara Doar, President, Pine Plains Board of Education; and Susan von Reusner, Red Hook Board of Education. In addition, phone interviews regarding roads and transportation were conducted with the Taconic Parkway Authority, Dutchess County Highway Department, and the New York State Department of Transportation; phone interviews regarding utility infrastructure were conducted with Central Hudson, Verizon, and Frontier Communications. MCPSRB members also attended a Town Board committee meeting held with Time Warner and the New York Public Service Commission to explore the availability of cable for broadband service to the Town.

B. Existing Conditions and Trends

Milan is one of the least populated of the Towns in Dutchess County, with a low population density. The effect of this is felt in the organization of the Town's infrastructure and the availability of public services.

1) Roads. The extent of roads in Milan is largely unchanged since the Master Plan of 1986; only three miles of Town roads have been added since then. This in part results from a Town Board resolution opposing the creation of additional Town roadways. Numerous rural lanes, often with long driveways off the rural lanes, have been created, all of which are maintained privately and can be in various states of repair. At public hearings concern was expressed by Lafayetteville residents about the addition of new driveways onto North Road.

The biggest potential impact on roads in the Town is the proposed development of the Carvel property. Traffic count data is currently being gathered in conjunction with this project. It is important to note that preliminary discussions with planners for the Carvel project indicate they intend to utilize Milan's provisions for rural lanes and shared driveways to minimize infrastructure in the project. They will probably propose that Milan adopt through roads as town roads.

Several at-grade crossings on the Taconic State Parkway south of Route 199 have been eliminated to address safety concerns; there is community desire that the existing remaining crossings remain open. Many residents have expressed concern, however, about the potential impact and safety hazards of construction and through traffic to and from the Carvel project using Academy Hill Road to the Ferris Road crossing on the Taconic State Parkway. When the project gets underway these residents would like to see the median crossing at Ferris Lane and Wilbur Flats Road closed to address this concern. Other citizens, however, want to see the median crossing remain open to facilitate east-west access in the northern part of Town. An alternative suggestion was made in the public hearings to reduce weight limits on roads to eliminate truck traffic instead of closing the crossings. This suggestion, while a good idea on the small Town access roads in the area, does not address the volume of commuter traffic expected once the Carvel project is built. Also, a Carvel representative has indicated they may propose a redesign of the

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Ferris Lane intersection to eliminate the through median crossing to eliminate truck traffic and discourage through traffic while keeping Ferris Lane open.

The Town Highway Department seeks to limit the width of Town roads to 18 feet as a traffic speed control mechanism. This is consistent with the recommendations of the National Institute of Home Builders, American Society of Civil Engineers, and Institute of Transportation Engineers, as detailed in a publication entitled *Residential Streets*, published by the Urban Land Institute. In addition to the effect on controlling speed, the 18-foot width reduces paving and snow removal costs while contributing to rural character.

At present there is no official road map of the Town; an official map should be created.

Available traffic count data was reviewed for County and State highways. In the table below, five comparable segments are displayed which provide insight into the changing traffic volumes since the 1986 Master Plan was completed.

Table 6.1 Milan Highway Traffic Counts

Road	Segment	Date	Adj. Avg. Daily Vol.	Peak Vol. (hour)
TSP	Rte. 199 to Columbia County Line	2001	4,786	436
TSP	Rte 199 to North Road	1998	5,063	448
TSP	Rte. 199 to Jackson Corners Rd.	1982	5,200	430
Rte. 199	TSP to CR50 (Mt. Ross Rd.)	2002	2,015	185
Rte. 199	TSP to CR50 (Mt. Ross Rd.)	1999	1,687	119
Rte. 199	TSP to CR50 (Mt. Ross Rd.)	1982	840	50
Rte. 199	Rte. 308 to TSP	2001	4,980	472
Rte. 199	Rte. 308 to TSP	1982	3,050	180
CR 56 (Turkey Hill)	Becker Hill to CR 54 (Milan Hill)	2001	510	41
CR 56 (Turkey Hill)	Mitchell Lane to CR 54	1984	268	
CR 56	CR 54 to Torre Rock Rd.	1999	425	35
CR 56	CR 54 to Torre Rock Rd.	1984	236	

Additional traffic count studies are underway, and considerable traffic data should be made available in the Environmental Impact Statement currently being prepared in conjunction with the Carvel development proposal. The limited data available at this time shows that traffic on the Taconic State Parkway (TSP) has changed little over the last two decades; traffic on Route 199 has increased dramatically on segments both east and west of the TSP (most rapidly—140%—on the segment east of the TSP toward Pine Plains); and traffic on two comparable county road segments has increased by 85%. Current and anticipated traffic volumes compare favorably when contrasted with similar roads in other areas of Dutchess County. The involved highway departments anticipate no required highway expansions in the foreseeable future.

The lack of public transportation noted in the 1986 report still exists. The low population density limits the feasibility of public transportation and forces reliance on the private automobile for transportation.

The accident report records for 2000 through 2004 shown in Table 6.2 were provided by the Dutchess County Sheriff's office. They do not include New York State Police accident reports, which would more

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likely record incidents on Route 199. One observation that can be drawn from this data is that State Route 199, the most heavily traveled road in the Town, has the most accidents, followed by Turkey Hill Road. Notable also is the apparent increase in accidents due to collisions with animals, almost exclusively deer, although one turkey did sneak in there. The large majority of these accidents are one-car property damage accidents. There were no reported fatalities in this record, although there was one fatal accident at the corner of Milan Hill Road and Route 199 that was presumably reported by the NYS Police. The accident record is not complete. The County Highway Department reports that their consolidated reports are not up to date due to loss of responsible staff, and the NYS Police records are manual for the period in question, having been automated only in late 2004. The Sheriff's Department records are automated and represent most of the accidents on the county and Town roads. There is no history of repetitive serious accidents at any location that requires note in this Comprehensive Plan. However, citizen concern is noted with respect to the intersection of North/South Road and Route 199. Area residents have requested the installation of traffic control. Citizens have also expressed concern with excessive speed on many of the Town's state and county roads.

Table 6.2 Dutchess County Sheriff's Department Auto Accident Reports

# Accident	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	Total Five years
Top Five	Rte 199 12	Rte 199 9	Rte 199 5	Rte 199 5	Rte 199 9	Rte 199 40
	THR 5		Acad H 4	Wilcox P 3	THR 3	THR 11
	South R 3		Cold Sp 3	THR 2	Wilcox P 2	Acad H 6
	Odak F 2		Milan H 3	Indian R 2		Wilcox P 6
	6 rds 1	8 rds 1	3 rds 1	6 rds 1	6 rds 1	Milan H 4
All except animal	28	17	17	18	20	100
All animal	8	16	12	16	24	76
Total Accident	36	33	29	34	44	176

2) Utilities. The significant land use devoted to utilities in the form of the Niagara Mohawk power distribution lines and Iroquois Gas Line should be noted, although they provide no services to Milan residents. Our primary providers—Central Hudson, Frontier and Verizon— report no service issues in Town and reflect the view that few service changes are expected, given the low population density of the Town. Central Hudson's data for residential electric customers indicates growth of 26.4% since 1984, the last year reported in the 1986 Master Plan. Residential service growth has accelerated in the years since 1999 and grew 6.4% in the four years to year-end 2003. The average annual number of commercial electric customers has grown by 15% (to 115) in the same four-year time period; service for industrial uses has not grown. Central Hudson reports that an additional power circuit will be needed if the Carvel project comes to fruition as proposed.

3) World Wide Web and Cable Service. Milan, given its low population density, is the only town in Dutchess County without adequate cable or DSL service. Some service exists in the areas of town adjacent to Red Hook and in parts of the area around of Academy Hill Road and Milan Hill Road. Providers do not anticipate this to change and are blunt in saying that service is demand/profit driven and the density of Milan does not support the extension of service. Population densities of less than 150 people per square mile are termed "rural areas" by the NYS Public Service Commission in their report "Rural Customer Access to Advanced Telecommunications Services" (February 2003). Milan's population density is approximately 65 people per square mile. Digital satellite connections are currently

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the only high-speed telecommunications option available to most people in Milan. High-speed access is expected to increasingly be available in the years ahead through wireless or other new technology.

4) Fire and Rescue. The Milan Fire Department is an employee-owned nonprofit corporation serving the Town of Milan and limited adjacent neighborhoods. The Town is serviced under a contract negotiated with the Fire Department. The Fire Department has replacement schedules for its equipment. It is suggested that the Town engage with the Fire Department in a cooperative effort to plan for long-range requirements that can then be factored into annual budget plans for the Town. The Fire Department is concerned with lack of enforcement capability with respect to fire codes in the Town.

Emergency ambulance service is provided by the Fire Department and is supported solely by donations. One of the factors affecting the Fire Department is the demographics of the Town, with large numbers of weekend residents, often with expensive homes. Such residents, even when they become full-time residents, expect fast response typical of their more urban experiences and are less likely to volunteer for emergency response teams than traditional residents. The Fire Department is experiencing a decline in response levels to their solicitations for both funds and volunteers as the Town grows. Financial support levels and available volunteers are currently strategic, rather than operational, issues. Some neighboring towns are experiencing shortage of sufficient volunteers and are going to part-time professional service, which can be at considerable cost to the town.

5) Police. Milan currently receives police coverage from the Dutchess County Sheriff's office and from the New York State Police. The County Sheriff's office has a substation in Rhinebeck, which services the three towns in County Zone 1 (Red Hook, Rhinebeck and Milan plus Pine Plains west of Route 82). The County Sheriff's office has not grown over the last 15 years to keep pace with a growing population. Some local police forces in Dutchess County have expanded with their assistance; however, they remain on call in all jurisdictions except the City and Town of Poughkeepsie. Milan at one time had a police presence, as reflected in the 1986 report recommending the replacement of a police car. The establishment of a local police force is not recommended by the County Sheriff's office, given the need for specialized training and knowledge in today's environment. (the assistance and backup of more highly trained personnel is required for all but the simplest police matters). The Sheriff's office suggests continued oversight by Town officials to ensure that the County provides the resources necessary for coverage in the Town. One alternative to be considered if further police presence is required is a long-term contract with the Sheriff's Department for specified coverage.

Good emergency communication is an issue both with the Fire Department. and Sheriff's Department. They rely on cellular service for both emergency communications and for the functioning of the Auto Vehicle Locator system. The Sheriff's office indicates that there are some areas of Milan and other rural areas with spotty cellular service. A similar issue with the Fire Department exists relative to the ability to communicate with the Dutchess County emergency command center. The Town is currently pursuing a solution to this second communications weakness through installation of a transmitter on the Town's microwave tower off Woody Row Road.

6) Schools. Milan's educational needs are served by three public school systems: Red Hook Central School District, Pine Plains Central School District and Rhinebeck Central School District. School taxes continue to rise and are an issue for most Town residents. Rhinebeck CSD reports that their student population, while projected earlier in the decade to rise modestly, has been stable. Pine Plains CSD had little information to offer of assistance to planning activities, as they do not have demographic projections. Red Hook CSD has the greatest concern about growth. The Red Hook Board of Education has prepared materials discussing the importance of restraining residential growth and encouraging a strong commercial tax base as mechanisms to control the growth of school taxes. The cost of educating students, as measured by the state for the three schools, is about the same; however, these costs exclude special education expense, transportation, and debt service. The latter two drive school taxes when rapid

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development causes the need for new schools or additions and additional bus routes. Further perspective on school taxes is addressed separately in a paper in the appendices.) Development is, in turn, a function of land-use decisions made by municipal officials. While Milan can control some of the increase in school taxes by restraint in residential development, school taxes are ultimately beyond the control of any one municipality when school districts draw students from multiple municipalities and counties, as is the case in the three school districts supporting Milan. This is an area where regional discussion and cooperation is important to the well-being of the citizens of each municipality.

7) Water and Wastewater Treatment Systems. Any water or wastewater system can become a burden to town taxpayers. In Milan there is only one small community water system, located on the Carvel property; their requirement for future water system development awaits the Carvel plan and findings of the environmental impact statement. Most Town residences are serviced by individual wells; the maintenance of clean water is a concern of the newly appointed Town Conservation Advisory Council. In some circumstances, common or shared systems may be appropriate to enable efficient development of clustered subdivisions. Given the lack of community water supply, it is important that adequate water is available to provide fire-fighting capability.

The potential need for central water or wastewater treatment systems in conjunction with proposed compact development in priority growth areas with planned purpose development is a controversial subject. Part of the concern is the cost of potential required connection to such a system. As pointed out in the Lafayetteville meetings, residential lots of less than one acre and commercial operations are not practical from a health and safety perspective without some type of central wastewater treatment system. Today many new technologies for small-scale wastewater treatment that have minimal aesthetic impact on the community are available. In many situations, such systems can be a more environmentally sound and healthy alternative to engineered septic or mound systems. More information should be provided by the Town, working with Dutchess County, to enable the community to weigh the benefits such systems could bring to land-use opportunities in the priority growth areas. In particular, it is recommended the Town explore the potential role of the Dutchess County Water and Wastewater Authority. The CPB understands that Dutchess County is willing to manage such facilities in municipalities, at least in some circumstances. The County's "Smart Growth Housing Task Force Report" of December 2001 recommended that: "The County should use funds from the Partnership for Manageable Growth to assist with the financing of water and/or sewer installation for moderately priced homes on small lots, townhouses or multifamily housing. The availability of water and sewer is essential to the development of moderately priced housing on small lots and this program will help municipalities bring such services to a site by providing matching grants for pre-construction/feasibility studies and construction projects."

8) Recreation. Milan is blessed with large protected state, county and Town lands for recreational purposes, including three state multiple use areas, a county park -- Wilcox Park -- and the Town Recreation Park.

Jackie Reynolds, Milan's Recreation Department Chair, reports that the Town Park has a Little League field and a softball field that are regularly used evenings during the spring and summer, principally by three leagues: Little League baseball, the Girls Taconic Softball Little League, and the Dutchess County Volunteer Firemen's Softball League. A basketball court is used for pickup games, and space is available for a volleyball court. There is a playground that gets limited use; its vitality would be enhanced by a new merry-go-round and a few unique pieces of equipment for variety. An obsolete merry-go-round has been removed and new playground equipment will be installed in 2006.

The surrounding larger towns where students go to school offer much competition that addresses recreational needs. The schools and larger towns have organized recreation departments and swim programs not available in Milan where youth tend to go to participate in recreational offerings with their schoolmates. Similarly little demand is noted in Milan for soccer fields and tennis courts—our citizens

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tend to gravitate to surrounding towns for such needs and seem to find the resources adequate. An experiment is planned for winter 2005-6 to establish an ice skating rink at the Town Park.

Some comment however that we lack community activities for adults. In a meeting with Lafayetteville residents, interest was expressed in expanded facilities for tennis or paddleball, for swimming, and for a jogging track. Concern was also expressed about pedestrian and bike access to the Town Recreation Park due to the lack of sidewalks in the area. Residents also expressed interest in walking/biking trails in the area.

An active senior program provides activities for the older segment of the population, while a recently established 'Teen Night' program offers social activities that are designed to bring the youth across town from the various school districts together. The Town Recreation Committee is developing a Milan recreation strategy, a prime component of which will be activities for adults.

Recreational opportunities through offerings at county-operated Wilcox Park are another possible enhancement. This resource is used primarily by people from outside Milan, with little local outreach. Wilcox Park could offer swimming or naturalist programs aimed at local residents. The Park could be integrated into a Milan Community Day as a way of acquainting people with its resources.

While much outdoor activity is available in Milan, there are no established trails or linkages between protected properties that would enhance their use. There is considerable biking, particularly on summer and fall weekends, however, there are no established biking accommodations in Town.

C. Progress

Much has been accomplished since the last Master Plan in 1986. A maintenance and rehabilitation program was established for all Town roads and highway department equipment was upgraded. An expansive new addition has been added to Town Hall. The Town landfill was closed and a waste transfer station established, which appears to be serving town needs adequately.

One area of town, however—the old Lafayetteville village grid—is not conducive to effective land use and has many out-of-compliance road and property conditions. This area should be reviewed for potential redevelopment opportunities or revision of zoning.

D. Summary

In summary, external service providers view Milan as a low population density area with few issues or need. The infrastructure of the Town is typical for a rural town with low population density and rural topography. There are no public transportation, no community water and sewer services and no public schools located within its borders. Milan has excellent community and governmental facilities with limited but adequate active recreational opportunities and ample passive recreation opportunities. Some residents view service issues in a different light, as the low population density presents economic limitations with respect to fire and emergency, police, telecommunications and public transportation services. Of greater concern than the level of services, however, is the need for enforcement of existing regulations in all areas. This includes control of speeding on the highways, and enforcement of zoning regulations and building and fire codes.

There is recognition that growth can bring pressure on existing infrastructure and services. Balancing these pressures while managing the expectations of a growing community, many of whom come from more densely populated environments, will be the challenge for the coming years.

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The CPB recommends that the Town adopt the following goals:

- 1) Ensure a high-quality level of community services consistent with a rural environment.
- 2) Anticipate the implications of growth on the adequacy of our infrastructure and services and identify any requirements.
- 3) Condition any approval of community water or waste water systems, such as might be needed in a planned purpose development, on long-term assurances that the Town will not become the manager of such systems and that they do not become a burden to future taxpayers.
- 4) Recommend those ongoing activities that can help ensure quality services and physical infrastructure of the Town.
- 5) Remain responsive to the citizens' desire and need to restrain the growth of taxes through effective expenditure and planning.

F. Recommendations

- 1) Create a list of all road and street names, including private roads, to be maintained in the Town Clerk's office; complete an official Town Map, designating State, County and Town roads, and indicating which roads are dirt, private, or seasonal roads. When adopted by the Town this map can form the base map for later use in establishing scenic road designations.
- 2) In the interest of public safety and service, initiate a review of Town regulations regarding residential access specifications—driveways, rural lanes, and roads—with reference to length, width, slope, materials and drainage.
- 3) Define criteria under which the Town will consider adopting new Town roads.
- 4) Refer any new Town roads created to the Town Historian for recommendation of a name in keeping with the area's historical context.
- 5) Encourage the State DOT and Taconic Parkway Authority to close the median crossings on Ferris Lane and Wilbur Flats Road to eliminate the danger and safety hazard of a high volume of traffic on small rural roads. Ready access for emergency crossing must be maintained, however. Should alternatives to closing the median crossing be proposed, evidence of effective traffic management using this alternative should be required before acceptance. Discourage other median closings that will primarily affect local citizen access to the TSP and east-west commutation in Town.
- 6) Complete a Town Recreation Strategy, with particular focus on addition of adult activities.
- 7) Establish a trails committee to examine trails and linkages opportunities within Milan and with regional connections. Negotiate with the Carvel project and New York State to establish a linear park from the Roeliff-Janson through Lafayette Multiple Use Areas for bicycle, roller blade and walking opportunities, eventually to connect to Lafayetteville, Wilcox Park, and Stissing Mountain recreation areas and to other destinations as the vision of a Town and regional trails network matures.
- 8) Encourage the county to establish bike paths on county roads throughout town. Link bike paths on county roads to trails.
- 9) Where they exist, retain the Town's dirt roads, and keep all Town roads narrow. Implement a scenic roads program to preserve the scenic vistas and dirt roads.
- 10) Encourage and pursue the expansion of telecommunications and broadband services to the Town, including extension from covered areas as they may be added, and as technological advances bring new options.
- 11) Expect the developers of the Carvel project to support the Town with regard to any infrastructure needs caused by development, including but not limited to water and wastewater systems, solid waste management, fire and emergency medical services, road improvements and maintenance, and administration and enforcement costs incurred as a result of the development.

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- 12) Explore further wastewater treatment system options with the Dutchess County Water and Wastewater Authority, and involve interested community members from the priority growth areas in discussions regarding any such proposed future systems.
- 13) When considering any Planned Purpose Development or conservation subdivision that may require community water or wastewater facilities, ensure that provisions are made for the developer to construct those facilities as part of the cost of the project, for owner or homeowner association maintenance, or for County assumption of management responsibilities.
- 14) Amend subdivision regulations to incorporate additional fire and emergency safety considerations, including, but not limited to, provision for dry hydrants and water impoundments.
- 15) Expand enforcement capabilities with regard to Town regulations, particularly building code, fire code, and zoning ordinances. Consider one full-time person as a generic enforcement officer.
- 16) Raise fees for Town services to support the resources required for Town administration and enforcement of regulations.
- 17) Incorporate capital requirements for new highway, fire and emergency equipment into the Town's annual budget cycle for the purposes of sound fiscal planning.
- 18) Establish a Town task force to investigate and propose steps to bring the old Lafayetteville planned community layout (both sides of the TSP) to a controlled resolution to facilitate future use and revitalization of the area.

G. Implementation Strategies

Most of the items recommended by the CPB are the responsibility of the Town Board to implement. Recognizing the limitations on the time of Town Board members, achieving these recommendations may best be accomplished by appointing special committees. For example, the Town Board can establish a Residential Access Committee, consisting of professional highway, construction, and fire department personnel, to review and make recommendations with regard to residential access and criteria for adoption of new Town roads. Other committees or task forces that could be formed include trails, the Lafayetteville grid issue, and other issues as noted above.

Many of these items require professional expertise. Seeking grants to provide professional consulting assistance for the drafting of pertinent regulations is advisable. The committees can also coordinate applications for grants, such as applications for National Park Service, TEA-21 and other grants available to facilitate trails development.